



THE MAGAZINE OF THE

# WORKERS

FEDERATION OF STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO

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# A MAIN STREET MOVEMENT

# AFSCME ACROSS AMERICA

Asian American Activist | Johanna  
Hester of UDW Homecare Providers Union  
(UDW)/AFSCME Local 3930. Photo: Michelle Lapihan



National News

## MEMBERS CONNECT WITH LGBT, LATINO, ASIAN PACIFIC GROUPS

Four AFSCME members have assumed leadership roles at a trio of national organizations, broadening the union's outreach to and involvement in the Latino-American, Asian Pacific American, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities.

The Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA) has chosen as its national president Johanna Hester, director of organizing and field services for UDW Homecare Providers Union (UDW)/AFSCME Local 3930. A union member for more than 20 years, Hester helped organize Filipino nurses in San Jose in the 1990s. She is now championing the home care cause, and has become one of the most respected labor leaders throughout California.

This July, during its national convention in Oakland, Calif., APALA also honored UDW with the Vincent Foo Award, named after a labor pioneer who won collective bargaining rights for thousands of Maryland school employees 40 years ago.

Yolanda Pumarejo, executive vice president of New York Social Service Employees Union Local 371 (District Council 37), has been appointed to the national executive board of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement. The AFL-CIO established that organization in 1973 to promote participation of workers of

Latino descent in the organized labor movement.

A longtime activist and delegate, Pumarejo co-chairs AFSCME's Latino Heritage Committee as well as the Committee of Concerned Social Workers. She belongs to the National Association of Social Workers, Coalition of Labor Union Women and Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

Bess Watts, president of Monroe County, N.Y., Local 828 of Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA)/AFSCME Local 1000, was elected this summer to represent small LGBT community chapters throughout the country on the national executive board of Pride at Work (PAW).

Watts, who works in the Monroe Community College library, led a successful campaign to get her union to support LGBT causes, beginning with getting domestic partner benefits included in her union's contract. She was ultimately instrumental in garnering broad labor support in Rochester for the successful New York Marriage Equality bill.

Joining Watts on the PAW national executive board, as its new diversity representative, is Octavio Velarde of Local 3299 in San Diego, Calif. Velarde, a self-described "ardent believer" in connecting the LGBT movement with working-class issues, has been involved in the labor movement since college.



LGBT Activist | Bess Watts of Local  
828 (New York Civil Service Employees  
Association (CSEA)/AFSCME Local  
1000). Photo: Watts Family